



P.O. Box 415, Botsford, Connecticut 06404. Phone 800-562-0610. Fax 203-261-5429.

Statement of
Bob Heffernan
Executive Director
Connecticut Green Industries Council
before the
Environment Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
on HB 5122 • The Growth & Sale of Golden Bamboo

February 22, 2011

House Bill 5122 may be both premature and not needed, although it's aiming in the right direction of personal responsibility of people who plant trees and plants.

There are already state laws on the books that define the responsibility and liability of property owners. For example, if an improperly maintained tree crashes across a property line and smashes the neighbor's car, the tree owner is obviously responsible and liable for the damages. The exact same laws apply to a situation where a neighbor's bamboo has crossed the property line into the neighbor's yard. This is a civil matter between property owners.

Our green industry has embarked on a campaign to educate both our tradespeople and the public about the responsible planting of bamboo. We are providing informational materials and plant tags that show how varieties of *running* bamboo should be contained with an easy-to-install physical barrier that would prevent the plant's rhizomes from spreading (copy attached). When bamboo is contained, it is not a problem.

So, section one of the bill is already covered under existing law. Section 2 of the bill is already being done by our industry.

Further, the bill refers to just one type of bamboo. The genus Bamboo has hundreds of species and many more hundreds of cultivars, each of which falls into one of two categories, *running* bamboos and *clumping* bamboos. Clumping plants will not spread like the running types do. Bamboo does not fit the state definition of an invasive plant. Several Bamboo species are quite difficult to identify and as to the exact species or cultivar. Even the Connecticut Invasive Plants Council, with all its expertise and experience, has not conclusively identified the species in several cases.

Passing this bill would be overkill; all in reaction to a couple of isolated cases throughout the entire state where bamboo was improperly planted and not maintained correctly. With public and industry education, future incidents should be minimized or even avoided completely.

Proper Planting for Running

Bamboo

Hardy bamboo can be used as a focal point in the garden, and is valuable as a fast growing screening plant. However, be aware this plant can spread quite rapidly by underground rhizomes (roots) after it becomes established, and some form of containment may likely be necessary (see reverse side). This is especially true along property lines. Mowing the new shoots is effective in controlling spread. When the bamboo shoots emerge in the spring, they are tender and easily clipped. Herbicides like Roundup® may also be effective in mid to late summer.

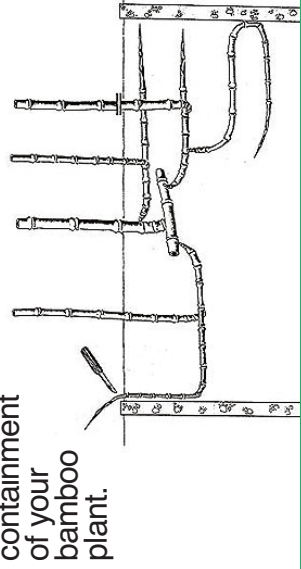


CONNECTICUT NURSERY & LANDSCAPE ASSOCIATION

Rhizome barrier for Running

Bamboo

You can construct a barrier out of polyethylene, metal, cement, or fiberglass to surround the plant and avoid undesirable spread. The barrier should extend 28"-30" deep into the soil, and extend above the soil at least 2". Polyethylene lasts longest and is most flexible to be reformed to any desired bed line. Leave a 2" lip above ground to check for any rhizomes (roots) that may try to grow over it. When properly installed, the rhizome barrier provides excellent containment of your bamboo plant.



Seek advice from your local plant professional.